

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**FEMA****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****November 7, 2003**

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PRESIDENT ORDERS DISASTER AID FOR WASHINGTON STATE FLOODS

WASHINGTON – The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today that President Bush has ordered federal disaster aid for Washington State to help families and businesses recover from the effects of floods that struck the state last month.

Michael D. Brown, FEMA Director and Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response at Homeland Security, said the President authorized the aid under a major disaster declaration issued today following a review of FEMA's analysis of the state's request for federal assistance. The declaration covers damage to private property from severe storms and flooding that occurred over the period of October 15-23.

Immediately after the President's action, Brown designated the following 15 counties eligible for aid to stricken residents and business owners: Chelan, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Mason, Okanogan, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston and Whatcom.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

In addition, Brown said cost-shared funding will be available to the state for approved projects that reduce future disaster risks. He indicated that damage surveys are continuing and additional counties and assistance for state and local government agencies may be designated later based on the results of the assessments.

Anthony Russell of FEMA was named by Brown to coordinate the federal relief effort. Russell said affected residents and business owners in the designated counties can begin the disaster application process by calling **1-800-621-FEMA (3362), or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired**. The toll-free telephone numbers **will be available starting tomorrow** from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week until further notice.

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WASHINGTON STATE DECLARATION—Add One

On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages Citizens Corps, the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.

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